

NOVA SCOTIA
LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY



PROVINCE HOUSE

CIRCULAR,

TO THE

FRIENDS OF TEMPERANCE IN NOVA SCOTIA.

We, the Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance of the Province of New Brunswick, feeling deeply conscious that the nature, objects, and organization of our Order, in the infancy of its operations in the Province, are peculiarly subject to mistake and misrepresentation, desire to address you in the *spirit of kindness*, and offer such explanations of the system, as will, we trust, prove satisfactory to every candid reader. We are induced to adopt this course more especially from the fact that our own minds are deeply imbued with a sense of the righteousness of the cause, and the great moral power of our organization in our respective communities; and knowing as we do, that no greater obstacle can be presented to the success of any undertaking than the well-meant opposition of men of high moral standing, we would seek by plain *unsophisticated* argument, and the simple statement of facts, to disabuse the minds of such, of the prejudices imbibed from the distorted medium through which circumstances may have compelled them to view our operations.

In addressing ourselves to this task, we deem it incumbent upon us, in the first place, to notice briefly the origin of the Order, with the organization of its Legislative Bodies. As stated in the Circular of the Grand Division of Pennsylvania, it was organized in the City of New York on the 29th September, 1842, by sixteen individuals, and as soon as the number of members appeared sufficient for the purpose, the whole Order was divided into three distinct bodies, called Subordinate and Grand Divisions, and the National Division. The

Subordinate Divisions are composed of persons from the age of eighteen and upwards, who obtain admission, either by direct application for a Charter or after the Division is instituted by the votes of the existing members. The Grand Divisions, of which there is one in each State, Territory, or Province, are composed of such superior officers of Sub-Divisions as they may elect annually as their Representatives. And the National Division, or SUPREME LEGISLATIVE BODY, is composed of the superior officers of Grand Divisions, elected in like manner. The wisdom and utility of this arrangement is so self-evident, that it appears superfluous to add anything explanatory or eulogistic. Based upon the great principle of Representative Government, which enters so largely into the Constitution of GREAT BRITAIN, it gives to every member that assurance of a *just* and *equitable* distribution of the benefits of the Order, which could not, we humbly conceive, be so well provided for in any other way.

The introduction of the Order into this Province, next demands a few passing observations. This was effected by means of a few gentlemen, resident in the Town of Saint Stephen, County of Charlotte, zealous advocates of the cause of Total Abstinence, who having obtained a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the Frontier Division, No. 22, of Calais, Maine; after having duly scrutinized the principles upon which the system was based, endeavoured to obtain a more satisfactory acquaintance with it by applying for admission into that Division. Having been duly initiated, and finding every thing as much to their satisfaction as they could have desired or expected, they almost immediately applied for and obtained a Charter for Howard Division, No. 1, to be located at Saint Stephen. This Division was opened on the 8th March last, when, in addition to the ordinary Charter, they received authority to grant Charters and open new Divisions in the Province, until the formation of a Grand Division. The result of these movements to the present is best known from the fact, that we have now a regular organized Grand Division, and sixteen Subordinates,

numbering collectively little short of one thousand members. Now when it is remembered, that ~~that~~ MONTHS have elapsed since the formation of the first Division in the province, it will appear that the Order has increased at the average rate of more than ONE HUNDRED MEMBERS per month; and when the following fact is added, that among these are a number of Clergymen of high standing in their respective denominations, and many lay gentlemen of well known moral worth, and considerable note, both in the literary and political world, it must certainly force the conviction upon every candid mind that there is a MORAL EXCELLENCE in the institution, which renders it worthy of the support of all who wish to promote the happiness and prosperity of mankind.

Having thus presented you with a brief sketch of the origin, organization, and progress of the Order, we next draw your attention to some of the benefits to be derived from connection with it. These are chiefly of a moral, fraternal, and pecuniary nature. The moral benefits arise out of the stringency of the pledge, against the manufacture, sale or use of *all* intoxicating liquors, which is rendered peculiarly binding by means of the solemnities attendant upon its administration, and comparatively easy in its observance from its constant repetition, and the accompaniment of precept and example on the part of the fraternity. The restored inebriate especially, finding himself surrounded with a band of respectable and intelligent friends, ever ready to encourage and assist him, is thereby greatly strengthened in his resolutions of amendment. And as strictness of moral deportment is required in all persons seeking admission, and is afterwards regularly inculcated upon the initiated, the practical working of the system has frequently been attended with decided improvement in this respect. The benefits, which for want of a better term, we designate *fraternal*, consist in the cultivation of kind and friendly feelings toward each other, manifested by strict and unremitting attention to such as may be disabled by sickness, or otherwise afflicted. If such attention be necessary, some of the

Brothers are appointed to watch in turn by the sick brother's couch, and endeavour to alleviate his sufferings by such gentle services as invalids require. He is a true benefactor, and alone worthy of honor, who brings comfort where before was wretchedness; who dries the tear of sorrow, and who pours oil into the wounds of the unfortunate; he is the true Christian hero—he is the man of honor in a Christian land. The pecuniary advantage cannot be better explained than by quoting the following paragraph from the Circular of the Grand Division of Pennsylvania:—"The pecuniary relief of sick brethren, to the extent of no less than \$3 per week, is sustained by initiation fees and weekly dues. This feature of our Order has proved itself of inestimable advantage to many afflicted members, for whom when assailed by disease, whether at home or abroad, the best medical attendance, comfortable lodgings, kind friends, nursing, &c., are always at hand. On the decease of a brother, not less than thirty dollars are appropriated as funeral benefit, and on the decease of a brother's wife, not less than half that sum."

These benefits are not mere theories, unsustained by facts. The practical operation of the system fully sustains the character of its profession; and we have no hesitation in boldly challenging every adversary to the severest scrutiny; not that we by any means expect to be found perfect, either in our collective or individual capacity—perfection is not to be looked for in human institutions—but as a means of saving from the terrible consequences of the *drinking customs of society*, and preserving its members from distress in seasons of affliction—we claim for it an elevated position amongst the moral and benevolent enterprises of the day.

The Order has been charged with superseding the efforts of Total Abstinence Societies for the suppression of drinking habits, and substituting a system, the influence of which can only be felt by its immediate adherents. This charge must certainly have had its origin in a very mistaken view of our Order, for, not only do we not wish to interfere with the operation of such Societies, but we desire to aid with all our might

in sustaining them: and to this end it is the expressed desire of the National Division that each Sub-Division should hold at least one public Total Abstinence Meeting in every quarter, and we apprehend that it will be found upon examination, that amongst the foremost ranks of the public advocates of the pledge there are, even now, large numbers of the SONS OF TEMPERANCE, for one of the duties we are exhorted to perform, is "To look round among mankind, and warn our fellow men from error's path."

Another charge preferred against us is, that our's is "a Secret Society." Now let us examine this point carefully. What constitutes a Secret Society? Is it not an association of men, united together for the accomplishment of some purpose, which they will not reveal to the world? Is not this at least an essential element in their organization? If it is, then we are free, perfectly free, from this charge. We expose all our principles in the light of day, and can conscientiously declare that the intentions or efforts of the Order do not embrace one solitary principle which has not been, again and again, proclaimed in the most public manner, and published in the public prints. Again we quote from the Circular of Pennsylvania. "The secrecy of the Order is such only as prudence, manliness, and kindness require, and is chiefly similar to that which is incident to all social organization; but inasmuch as the Order is too extensive and numerous for any personal knowledge, and every where accords *rights, advantages, comforts, and privileges*, it is needful to provide for our "family circle" some uniform, yet private mode, whereby those rights and benefits may be enjoyed, without exposing them to the vicious and unprincipled. The mode is simple, and consists in our pass-words and their frequent changes. Our ceremonies are sensible and appropriate. As an Order we hold that kindness, reason, argument, appeal, and a good and pure example are our legitimate means of increase." "Kindness is the key to unlock the human heart, whether in civilized or savage life."

Perhaps there is no charge with which we have been assailed more serious in its nature, and injurious in its consequences, than one which usually proceeds from a source, whence, of all others, opposition to a good cause ought not to arise, viz., from persons of high religious standing, and, as a consequence, possessing great moral influence. Will such permit us to address them with all respect, and request them to examine deeply and seriously the ground of their opposition; and if after such examination they find themselves in error, we are well assured that their opposition will give place to the dictates of their better judgment, and they will be led to throw the weight of their influence upon our side; and when this shall become extensively the case, our cause will receive such an additional impetus as will greatly facilitate the accomplishment of our grand object, the destruction of vice. The charge to which we allude is, that we substitute a mere ephemeral morality of human origin, for the weightier sanctions of Christianity. Nay! brethren, if you will permit us thus to address you, this is not the case.—We claim no higher position for our Order than that of the handmaid of Religion; and we could point you now to numbers of devout and constant worshippers, in the respective churches of our communities, who, but recently delighted to spend the Christian Sabbath in other occupations and different company, and might to the present have remained in the same degraded state, had not the efforts of members of our Order been directed to their renovation, thus preparing them for resuming the position in the church, for which they had been utterly unfitted by the defiling and demoralizing power of intoxicating drinks; and now they are brought directly under the influence of the Divine principles of Religion. It is true that we take as the motto of our Order, the words "Love, Purity, and Fidelity," but by this we simply mean, *fraternal love, purity of intention, and fidelity to our obligations*, and every Son of Temperance understands the motto thus, so that this, when properly explained, can present no ground of objection to the most scrupulous mind.

To notice particularly the numerous objections of a less important character, which are brought forward by the different classes of opponents to the Order, would be a task almost impossible to be accomplished. We trust, however, that to the candid and enquiring mind, what we have here advanced will prove sufficient to allay any apprehensions, as to the propriety of countenancing the proceedings of the Order. The power of our Order consists in the fact that "our Divisions, distributed like so many garrisons of regular Temperance Troops, overawe our common opponents, inspire the timid friends of the cause, give courage to the stoutest, and confident assurance of victory to all." * * * "The entire Order, by its quiet, but to the enemy, new and alarming tactics, is rapidly and broadly advancing in the march of Temperance." * * * "We have no oaths, no mockeries, no secret modes of recognition, such as many dislike." Although originating in the United States, the Order is beautifully adapted to the genius of British feeling, and as all subjects of a political and religious controversy are carefully excluded from our Divisions, nothing can possibly arise to offend the prejudices of the most enthusiastically loyal subjects of the British Crown. Our union with the United States can only tend to perpetuate that peace which now exists, and to cultivate such feelings as every good man will acknowledge ought to prevail between the inhabitants of two nations, claiming one common origin, speaking one common language, and possessing to a very great extent, one common interest.

In conclusion, we address ourselves to the members of our Order. Brethren, we would exhort you to patient persevering effort. You are engaged in a noble undertaking, and much depends upon your individual exertions. Ever keep alive in your remembrance the peaceful principles of our Order, and while you are energetic in your efforts, let nothing betray you into the use of censorious or bitter language towards your opponents. Even when you speak of, or to the traffickers in ALCOHOL, let it be with *becoming mildness*, free from every thing like invective. We wish to reform,

not to injure; and if reformation cannot be effected by the peaceful means we employ, we must neither despair nor yield an inch of vantage ground, but go forward putting our confidence in the God of truth, whose smile is evidently upon us, and whose blessing has, and will continue to attend our exertions, so long as we acknowledge him to be the "great head over all." The good that is done upon the earth, it is the Lord that doeth it." "We speak as to wise men, judge ye what we say."

In the Bonds of Love, Purity, and Fidelity, we remain, &c.

NOTE.—The above Circular, was issued by the G. D., S. of T. of New Brunswick. It is now re-printed by G. D. of Nova Scotia as a valuable tract for circulation.

A. H.

Printed by J. Bowes & Son, Halifax.

